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Title	No child left behind COIN strategies to deny recruitment of adolescent males in the southern Philippines
Publisher	Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School
Issue Date	2009-12
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10945/4457

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: COIN STRATEGIES TO DENY
RECRUITMENT OF ADOLESCENT MALES IN THE
SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES**

by

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December 2009

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2009	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE No Child Left Behind: COIN Strategies to Deny Recruitment of Adolescent Males in the Southern Philippines			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Herbert A. Daniels			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.	
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) Severing the link between the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Jolo population is critical to destroying the terrorist organization. The U.S. support to Philippine Security Forces (PSF) has helped to capture or kill the ideological cadre of the ASG but fails to prevent younger rebels from taking their place. While PSF continue to aggressively pursue the ASG, the U.S. has provided abundant assistance to improve the livelihood of the Jolo population. Positive results from the U.S.-supported development can be observed through increased access to healthcare and education. However, the strategy may fail to target a key demographic of the Jolo population, adolescent males, who currently make up approximately 80% of the ASG's estimated population of 400 rebels. To prevent their recruitment by the ASG, operations and development on Jolo must not marginalize adolescent males. The warrior traditions of the native Tausugs on Jolo present a challenge when it comes to addressing the needs of adolescent males and encourages their participation in the security and development of Jolo vice participation in rebellious or illicit activities.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Abu Sayyaf Group, ASG, Jolo, Sulu Archipelago, Philippines, Moro, Counterinsurgency, COIN, Tausug, Filipino Muslim			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 61	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

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OF ADOLESCENT MALES IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES**

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

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ABSTRACT

Severing the link between the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Jolo population is critical to destroying the terrorist organization. The U.S. support to Philippine Security Forces (PSF) has helped to capture or kill the ideological cadre of the ASG, but it fails to prevent younger rebels from taking their place. While PSF continue to aggressively pursue the ASG, the U.S. has provided abundant assistance to improve the livelihood of the Jolo population. Positive results from the U.S.-supported development can be observed through increased access to healthcare and education. However, the strategy may fail to target a key demographic of the Jolo population, adolescent males, who currently make up approximately 80% of the ASG's estimated population of 400 rebels. To prevent their recruitment by the ASG, operations and development on Jolo must not marginalize adolescent males. The warrior traditions of the native Tausugs on Jolo present a challenge when it comes to addressing the needs of adolescent males and encouraging their participation in the security and development of Jolo vice participation in rebellious or illicit activities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the Philippine *SuperFerry 14* was torn apart by a violent explosion in the lower decks of the passenger seating area, killing 114 passengers.¹ Responsibility for the devastating attack was claimed by a little known terrorist organization located in the Sulu Archipelago of the southern Philippines, known as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Initially dismissed as a prank, forensic evidence later confirmed the statements of the captured bomber and launched the ASG to the forefront of terrorist organizations operating in South East Asia.² The ASG was no longer seen as a minor criminal organization focused primarily on *kidnap for ransom* (KFR) schemes in the southern Philippines, targeting tourists and foreign businessmen.

The ASG's historical ties to Al Qaeda and cooperation with the Indonesian-based Jemaah Islamiya (JI) have compelled the U.S. to support the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) as its security forces aggressively pursue the ASG in the southern Philippines. On the island of Jolo, the U.S. and the GRP are using a combination of combat operations to destroy the ASG with population-focused operations designed to sever the links between the ASG and the Jolo population. There have been successes against the ASG noted by the Agence France-Presse, which reported at least 70 rebels killed in 2009 and the overall strength of the ASG reduced from over 1000 to approximately 400. However, the dead rebels have come at a great cost to the population and to Philippine Security Forces (PSF), which have lost at least 48 soldiers to the ASG in 2009 alone.³ Many of the Islamist ideologues who founded the ASG have been captured or killed, but the organization continues to recruit new rebels from the Jolo population and its ranks may be growing once again.⁴

¹ Simon Elegant, "The Return of Abu Sayyaf," *Time*, August 23, 2004.

² Elegant, "The Return of Abu Sayyaf."

³ Agence France-Presse, "Abu Sayyaf survives U.S.-backed Philippine crackdown," <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20091111-235574/Abu-Sayyaf-survives-US-backed-Philippine-crackdown> (accessed on line November 22, 2009).

⁴ Jim Gomez, "Abu Sayyaf Back to Terror," *Washington Times*, February 21, 2009.

As the U.S. and GRP pursue the ASG through combat operations it is critical to deny the ASG the ability to recruit from the population. Approximately 80% of the ASG's rebels are males under the age of 25, high school dropouts who are looking for monetary gain through the organization's criminal activities.⁵ This thesis intends to argue that unique approaches are necessary to deny recruitment of adolescent males by the ASG whose appeal is based, in part, on the warrior traditions of Jolo's native inhabitants, the Tausugs. The U.S. and GRP have worked to improve conditions for Jolo's inhabitants through infrastructure development and increased access to education and healthcare. This has had a positive impact on the Jolo population. But the continued lack of security prevents any further development and without economic development the GRP may find itself dealing with a healthy, educated, but disaffected generation of adolescent males lured to the ASG.

Much of this thesis draws on my first-hand experiences in Jolo in 2006, as well as on conceptual literature that helps explain why adolescent males may be drawn to organizations like the ASG. Serving as an advisor to Philippine military units on Jolo offered me many opportunities to interact with native Tausugs, particularly while conducting humanitarian or development missions. Understanding the Tausugs is critical because the ASG is comprised almost entirely of Tausug rebels. The second chapter of this thesis will introduce the ASG and describe why it survives on Jolo today. The third chapter introduces the Tausugs of Jolo and explains how the Tausugs' warrior traditions necessitate a unique approach if the rebellion on Jolo is to be subdued. The fourth chapter will briefly review the U.S. and GRP strategy on Jolo and its effects on the Tausug population. The fifth chapter will discuss why adolescent males, on Jolo in particular, deserve specific attention and recommend programs that may serve to deter the interest of adolescent males in the ASG.

⁵ Agence France-Presse, "Abu Sayyaf Survives."

II. THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

A. THE EMERGENCE OF THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

The ASG, originally named Al Harakat Al Islamiya, was founded around 1989 by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani following his return to the southern Philippines after fighting with the Mujahideen against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The goal of the ASG was the establishment of an Islamic State of Mindanao and the expulsion of all Christian influence in the region. As indicated in an ASG proclamation, “Surah J-al Fatiha,” the organization’s objective was to liberate Muslim Mindanao from the perceived tyranny and oppression of the Catholic Philippine government and the armed forces.⁶ While the original goal was predicated on an independent Mindanao, Janjalani eventually aligned the ASG’s goals with those of Al Qaeda and the regional and global spread of Islam through armed struggle.

A graduate of several prominent Islamic universities in Syria, Libya, and Saudi Arabia, Janjalani and his younger brother, Khaddafy Janjalani, were instrumental in recruiting and training Moros for jihad in Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁷ As a result, Janjalani developed close ties to Osama Bin Laden, and was instrumental in the establishment of an Al Qaeda foothold in Mindanao.⁸ Through Janjalani’s connections with Al Qaeda, the ASG received large amounts of money and additional military training. Though small in size, the group was heavily populated with experienced fighters from Afghanistan and within months of organizing the ASG undertook violent action.

Between 1991 and 1996, at least 67 terrorist attacks were linked to the ASG. The ASG also played a supporting role in Al Qaeda plots to assassinate Pope John Paul II and

⁶ Peter Chalk, “US Security Assistance to Philippines: A Success Story Against Terrorism,” *CTC Sentinel*, February 2008, 4.

⁷ Lino Miani, “Arms Trafficking in the Sulu Region and National Responses to a Regional Problem.” PhD Dissertation (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 2009), 59.

⁸ Miani, “Arms Trafficking,” 59.

President Bill Clinton.⁹ The ASG's successful operations backed by its accepted ideology in the Muslim world gained the group notoriety and the eventual support of the governments of Iraq and Iran, and also organizations such as Hamas, Jema'ah Islamiya, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Kumpulan Mujahadin Malaysia, and both the Egyptian and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.¹⁰ Ironically, however, the ASG's quick rise to prominence in the world of terrorism also led to its swift decline.

B. THE EARLY FALL OF THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) launched a concerted effort against the ASG that resulted in the death of Abdurajak Janjalani in 1998 on the island of Basilan¹¹. From that moment, the ASG lost its ideological drive and focused its activities instead on profit-driven illicit activities.¹² Most notorious was the Malaysian Sipadan Island resort raid in 2000 in which the ASG captured 25 mostly western tourists, including three Americans. With millions of dollars paid in ransom for the tourists, the ASG failed to reorganize and, instead, remained focused on illicit activities rather than resuming the ideological role envisioned by its founders. Further, in response to the raid on the resort, the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia joined with the Philippines in fighting transnational crime, increasing pressure on regional terrorist and insurgent organizations that exploited the island borders of all three countries. Lastly, the apparent disregard for ideology and the ASG's focus on profiteering drove away the last of the ASG's external Muslim supporters, and by 2001 there is little evidence of any external support for the ASG.¹³

⁹ Zachary Abuza, "Al Qaeda Comes to Southeast Asia," in Paul J. Smith (ed.), *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 52.

¹⁰ Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Runding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed - and How to Stop It* (Chicago: Bonus Books, 2005), cited by Lino Miani, "Arms Trafficking in the Sulu Region and National Responses to a Regional Problem," 60.

¹¹ Chalk, "US Security Assistance," 4.

¹² Lino Miani, "Arms Trafficking in the Sulu Region and National Responses to a Regional Problem," 60.

¹³ Miani, "Arms Trafficking," 61.

C. A FLEETING REEMERGENCE

Continued pressure against the ASG by the AFP and PNP, as well as support from U.S. forces starting in 2001, also wore down popular local support for the ASG. The peace process between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) eliminated the arms market that kept the ASG viable. Yet, despite the capture and killing of many of the ASG's factional leaders in 2002, Khaddafy Janjalani, Abdurajak's younger brother, was able to regain control and reestablish the organization, while also returning it to its ideological roots.¹⁴ Cooperating with Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI), the ASG initiated a new series of terrorist attacks in 2004 that culminated in the bombing of *Superferry 14*. Not only was this the worst terrorist attack in maritime history, but ranks as the world's fourth deadliest strike since 9/11.¹⁵

The brutality of this attack resulted in a series of successful AFP operations against the ASG which significantly decreased its numbers and diminished its strength, and also isolated the organization from JI's logistical and financial support. With the death of Khaddafy and other prominent leaders between 2006 and 2007, the ASG leaned heavily on its ties with the MNLF and MILF.¹⁶ While this cooperation threatened the peace process in the southern Philippines, with Khaddafy's death the ASG once again lost its ideology and refocused on profiteering through illicit activity. Relying on its regional ties, the ASG blended back into the population and members fell back on family networks and traditions for protection and legitimacy.

While the fight in the southern Philippines is far from over, the purpose behind the ASG's activities has changed. The AFP commander running military operations in the South, and long-time veteran of the war-torn islands, Major General Juancho Sabban, believes the ASG is no longer fighting for a cause. "All the Abu Sayyaf's ideologues are dead; the ones left behind are bandits. The support they're counting on from other

¹⁴ Miani, "Arms Trafficking," 62.

¹⁵ Simon Elegant, "The Return of Abu Sayyaf," *Time*, August 23, 2004.

¹⁶ Jonathan Adams, "In Basilan, Philippines, a US counterterrorism model frays," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 11, 2008.

countries has vanished. Now, everybody's on his own, trying to raise money through kidnappings.”¹⁷ Following the disappearance of Radulan Sahiron, who was the last of the old cadre, in December of 2008, a new and younger generation of local leaders is competing for control of the ASG.

To maintain support from the local population, the ASG relies heavily on its members' familial ties and has always been careful about how the organization conducts its operations. Historically, the ASG has emphasized targeting non-Tausugs and non-Muslims. Current ASG operations seem to follow this same pattern, whether the ASG is targeting the Jolo infrastructure or conducting kidnappings for ransom. The most recent abductions of ICRC workers on Jolo indicate the organization's continued emphasis on foreigners. In this manner, the ASG can avoid alienating family support which it relies on for providing material resources and a safe haven. So long as the ASG continues to target security forces – the symbol of Philippine government control—or non-Tausugs, it is not likely the local population on Jolo will ever turn on the ASG.

D. FROM IDEOLOGY TO PROFIT

As the Philippine security forces, backed by the U.S. military, continue to reduce the ranks of the ASG, and as USAID (as well as other NGO/GO) sponsored programs encourage development on Jolo, the ASG was forced to adapt and adjust its operations in order to survive. Increased combat operations by the MILF as it confronts the Philippine military provided opportunities for the ASG to acquire smuggled weapons and military supplies, but a growing naval presence in the Sulu Archipelago and multilateral cooperation between the U.S., Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia will make these opportunities very risky.¹⁸ Already, the ASG has expanded into the realm of narcotics trafficking. A 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) released by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs discloses that the ASG was “engaged in providing security for marijuana cultivation, protection for drug trafficking organization operations, and local drug

¹⁷ Gomez, “Abu Sayyaf Back.”

¹⁸ Miani, “Arms Trafficking,” 109.

distribution operations.”¹⁹ Coupled with the kidnappings for ransom, ASG activity seems focused heavily on profiteering through illicit means.

Increased criminal activity will likely alienate the ASG, once again, from the Muslim extremist organizations that funded and supported the ASG insurgency previously. It is possible that the AFP’s success against the ASG, along with the ASG’s detrimental loss of personnel, has forced it into illicit activities in order to rebuild and recruit. The lucrative potential for profiteering tied to drugs can be enticing to young men who have no real potential in legitimate society. If the ASG can survive through illicit activities, perhaps it can hold on long enough for a new generation of fundamentalist leaders or ideologues to consolidate the organization and refocus its efforts in keeping with the principles that led to its creation. To do so, the ASG could rely heavily on its links to the Tausug population of Jolo and its members’ strong commitment to family above all else.

¹⁹ As referenced in Michaela P. del Callar, “US links ASG, NPA to drug trafficking in RP,” *The Daily Tribune*, March 2, 2009.

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III. THE TAUSUG

A. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The Tausug people of the southern Philippines comprise a very small ethnic group and, as such, very little literature exists about the population. According to the 2007 Philippine government survey, Sulu Province, home to the Tausugs, has a population of 849,670 people, a little over 620,000 of whom live on the island of Jolo.²⁰ While it may seem easy to disregard such a small demographic amongst thousands of ethnic groups in Southeast Asia, understanding the Tausugs may prove critical to defeating the ASG and ending centuries of insurgent violence in the southern Philippines. The Tausugs' unique culture, strong familial relationships, and fierce warrior traditions are at the foundation of organizations such as the ASG, and some of the lessons to be learned might well apply to other insurgent groups that struggle for autonomy or independence from the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

B. WHAT IS A TAUSUG?

The Tausug people have inhabited the Sulu Archipelago for around 1000 years. Their language is closely related to many languages spoken in the Central Philippines and, racially, they are very little different from Filipinos to the north, although no Tausug considers himself a Filipino. While Tausugs are spread across the Archipelago, from the southern shores of Mindanao all the way to the northern shores of Borneo, the island of Jolo has historically been dominated by the Tausug and has been the center of Tausug politics. It is also home to the site of the historic Tausug Sultanate of Sulu, whose Sultan abdicated all secular power to the U.S. in 1915.²¹

Islam spread through the southern Philippines during the 14th century, but, thanks to the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century did not spread north of Mindanao. For the

²⁰ National Statistics Office, Republic of the Philippines, <http://www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/2007/municipality.pdf> (accessed August 26, 2009).

²¹ Thomas M. Kiefer, *The Tausug: Violence and Law in a Philippine Moslem Society*, (Illinois: Waveland Press, 1986). Very little is published beyond Kiefer's contributions to the study of the Tausugs, unless noted otherwise, Kiefer is used exclusively for this introduction to the Tausugs.

next 300 years, the Spanish were at war with Muslims as Spain attempted to spread Christianity throughout the Philippine islands and violently convert the “Moros,” a nickname borrowed from the Spanish fight against the Muslim Moors in southern Spain. Such prolonged resistance against Christian conversion unified many of the different ethnic groups of the southern Philippines and firmly entrenched Islam in the region. Spanish colonization was only the start of what Tausugs consider to be centuries of religious persecution and justified resistance against Christian governments.

Even with the replacement of the Spanish by the Americans, the Tausugs have continued to defend their lands against what they regard as Christian control of their formerly independent state. The fact that many of the islands in the southern Philippines, including the Tausug island of Jolo, were once independent and were never obeisant to the Philippine government is not lost on the population and helps explain why some Tausugs remain resistant to GRP control.

C. JOLO SUBSISTENCE AND ECONOMY

1. Land Settlement

Tausugs live in dispersed settlements outside the towns of Jolo Island. Households are most often located near working tracts of land, but Tausugs may site villages defensively, especially where there is a history of local feuding. Each household sits at the center of a series of social and territorial relations. However, there are no distinct social groups or boundaries to speak of. Rather, the society divides into loosely defined social and spatial units as observed from each individual’s vantage point.

The first of these territorial units is the household. Households, which include the members of two or three generations of one family, generally occupy a single-room bamboo hut with nipa palm roof built off the ground to keep the house cool and discourage insects. Most houses have a series of exterior porches and a disconnected kitchen. Clusters of households are often composed of close kinsmen and comprise the next level territorial unit. One does not have to be close kin to live within a household cluster.

Hamlets are composed of several household clusters. The hamlet is not defined by territorial space, but by family relations, as well as the proximity of clusters to each other. In this case, it is not necessary that the local leadership be located within the center of the hamlet or even in the densest cluster of households. The most clearly defined center of leadership, instead, comes at the next level, that of the community. The community is identified by a core group of leaders who support one among their number in particular. He is the headman, and goes by a collective name recognized by outsiders. Hamlets and communities are not comprised wholly of kin, but contain networks connected through their social relations who have reached a consensus that the presiding headmen maintain control and authority within their communities.

Even today, community boundaries are not distinct. This is especially apparent in areas of low population or sparse development. Solidarity within a community is dependent on several factors: the strength of the headman, marriages within a community, attendance at public activities, and the prevalence of recent feuding. A strong community led by a powerful headman may be able to exert influence over surrounding communities through political manipulation, thereby creating a region. Regions today are generally represented by elected government officials. While the officials are Tausug, they are somewhat (but not wholly) removed from the traditional Tausug system. Regionally elected officials still rely heavily on their family bonds and extensive alliances to maintain power over the region and control within the family.

The next level up from the region is that of the island itself. At this level, two simple distinctions can be made, between Tausugs of the interior and Tausugs of the beach. Finally, there is the world of Islam. While the West is considered to be outside Tausugs' world, what defines 'the west' has not been well appreciated by many Tausugs on Jolo, though this is rapidly changing due to increased access to education across the island. However, most Tausugs still see two worlds, one which is Muslim and one which is not.

2. Agriculture

Jolo Island is a rugged volcanic island with a rich variety of vegetation and micro climates. Once covered in dense tropical rainforest, much of the island has been converted to support a variety of agricultural products. Open grassy savannahs are ideal for dry rice cultivation, while tall coconut groves tower over cassava plants. Livestock is minimal and used mainly to support individual households. Dense forests still exist at the higher elevations, up to or above 3000 feet, and the island is surrounded by coral reefs and mangrove swamps along the southern coast.

Jolo is the capital city and center of commerce and trade, as well as government authority. Traditionally the seat of the sultanate, Jolo is a city of mixed populations, including a considerable number of Christian Filipinos serving as government officials and in other professional capacities. A few large towns are spread across the island, but these towns, like the rest of the island outside of Jolo City, are primarily inhabited by Tausugs.

Traditionally, land settlement and cultivation are very different from what is familiar to most Westerners. Land can be inherited and owned according to customary Tausug law. Land can also be rented, or “borrowed,” for a nominal fee paid to the owner. These rights can be inherited as well. Land may also be “borrowed” for cultivating cassava, but in this case it is not customary to pay for the right. To cultivate coconuts, it is not necessary to own the land below the tree and the trees can be passed along to descendents. These agricultural practices hint at the significance of Tausug customary law.

Traditional methods of farming are still practiced over most of Jolo. In accordance with the Muslim calendar, crops are planted simultaneously across the island. This also reduces chances that birds may pick all the seeds, and during the planting period all fowl must be caged. Harvesting is generally done communally on a reciprocal basis and certain percentages are shared between families, as well as with religious leaders and landlords. Historically, rice was the dominant crop, but that has changed over the years and has been replaced by fishing.

3. Fishing

Many traditional methods are still used for fishing. Rattan nets are woven to net fish and poisons made from local plants are used to stun fish in shallow waters. Large woven nets are used by full-time fisherman, while traditional boats may now sport gas motors. While discouraged and even illegal in some places, the use of dynamite is also still common today. Tausugs from the interior will routinely travel to the coasts to fish, but many rely on markets for the purchase of fresh fish, which is consumed several times a week. While the waters around Jolo are still adequate for providing for local consumption, full-time fishermen are increasingly forced to compete with larger and better equipped vessels.

4. Trade and Industry

Much of the rural population still uses small markets for the sale and purchase of local commodities, primarily food. As the road networks improve on Jolo, so does the access to finished products. It is not uncommon to see small markets that convene only once or twice a week with packaged foods or beverages for sale. Larger towns carry a greater supply of finished products in small stores and specialty shops. Small shops and food stands with a constant access to electricity provide fresh baked goods, cold beverages and even ice cream. Some towns may even offer movies to rent, as well as home or agricultural hardware, and a variety of fuels for sale. The proximity of these finished goods, as well as food markets, means local inhabitants are not forced to travel far beyond their local communities. Whatever necessities cannot be found locally can certainly be found in Jolo City.

With a population of around 90,000, Jolo Town is a thriving and growing urban community. Jolo Town contains everything enjoyed by most modern cities – refrigerated grocery stores, hospitals, universities, internet access, banks and a busy port to support a growing economy. Passenger superferries and cargo ships routinely pass through the Jolo ports, moving people between the islands, depositing finished products, and taking away raw materials.

The increasing commercial activity in Jolo Town is indicative of a modernizing economy but, also highlights a critical problem: the inhabitants of Jolo have no industry to speak of and export only a few raw materials beyond coconut, charcoal, and seafood. Despite a modernizing capital city – albeit relatively poor in comparison to the larger Christian-dominated cities to the north – the remainder of the island is seeing very little development. Yet, until Jolo experiences a greater level of security, it is not likely that the island will receive the necessary investment to expand development beyond Jolo City.

D. ISLAM IN TAUSUG SOCIETY

Tausug religion is a folk version of Islam, incorporating most of its major tenets, yet also maintaining many features of ritual and belief which are either survivals of a time when the Tausug were not yet Muslim or else reworkings of orthodox Muslim ideas into a new and unique synthesis. In addition there are numerous religious practices which have little basis in orthodox Islam.²²

While anthropologist Thomas Kiefer's description was doubtless true of the Tausugs in the late 1960s, Islam today on Jolo is much more similar to the orthodox Islam seen around the Muslim world. What is most important to note is that Islam has played a critical role in holding Tausug society together despite centuries of feuding, and it has helped keep the Muslims in the Philippines united against Christian colonizers and, more recently, the Christian Philippine government.

Folk Islam on Jolo today is predominantly observed by the elderly and by married women. Because of the cultural expectation that young men will behave "badly" according to Islamic tenets, men do not strictly observe Islam until they are at an age to settle down and seek a peaceful and productive life. Consequently, young males remain free to pursue activities otherwise prohibited by Islam and not condoned by religious leaders. In a number of other senses as well, Tausug observance of Islam incorporates some unique elements not part of Islamic tradition.

God has always existed in Tausug religious belief and variations of God were easy to adapt when Islam arrived in the southern Philippines. But other aspects of

²² Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 112.

Tausug folklore were also retained and are occasionally observed in Tausug rituals. For instance, other supernatural beings and lesser spirits inhabit many places, both in nature and in non-natural locations. While not normally associated with Islam, the spirits are classified as those who either do the bidding of God or those who violate the commandments of God. Evil spirits, for instance, are responsible for causing man suffering, but can be easily banished through the use of amulets and charms, as well as ritual offerings.

While it is accepted that suffering is ultimately the will of God, an afflicted person can seek assistance through a priest or a *curer*. A priest derives his knowledge from the traditions and tenets of the Quran while curers draw their knowledge from their experiences with the offending spirits. It is common, even today, for Tausugs to recite Muslim prayers, provide offerings to a curer, wear protective or rehabilitative amulets, and still seek medical care through established clinics and doctors. One can see much the same variety even when it comes to the Tausug version of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Despite the fact that Tausugs readily accept one true God according to the first pillar, they still believe in lesser spirits. The second pillar, dealing with five daily prayers, is really only practiced by elderly men expected to maintain a degree of religious piety. Otherwise, Friday is the only traditionally observed day of prayer on Jolo. Fasting during Ramadan, the third pillar, is also strictly observed only by the elderly. The fourth pillar, the giving of alms, is only necessary if an individual receives a bountiful rice harvest and is supported only thanks to the belief that the failure to provide alms may lead to a poor harvest the following year. Finally, the fifth pillar, pilgrimage to Mecca, is not common in the poorer villages of Jolo. A pious life is considered a reasonable substitute.

Despite the variations of folk Islam practiced on Jolo, the religion has served to unify the Tausugs against the non-Muslim GRP. Without the perceived aggression by the Christian GRP, Tausugs would likely remain factionalized and focused on smaller-scale regional or family issues. The importance of family and friendship networks is explored further below.

E. THE VALUE OF KINSHIP

1. Blood, Cousins and the World

The value of kinship cannot be underestimated in Tausug society. In Thomas M. Kiefer's anthropological study *The Tausug*, he notes that "kinship bonds form the cement in which a variety of political, economic, and military obligations are expressed."²³ This is relevant not only for Tausugs' day-to-day social interaction, but, for Tausugs dealing with outsiders as well. As degrees of relatedness decrease, so does loyalty, along with the frequency of social interactions. In contrast, the potential for violence rises. As the Government of the Philippines (GRP) attempts to assert its authority over islands like Jolo, it is not too hard to see how easily Tausugs might pick up arms against government security forces since soldiers do not fall within the realm of kinship at all. Nor can they be considered 'brothers' in Islam.

Tausugs identify kinsmen through ever-expanding circles of relationship on both their father's and the mother's side. The closeness of the relative implies certain obligations between the kin regarding every aspect of social interaction, especially in terms of violence. The degrees of kinship are based on blood relationships, the closest of connections being to one's father, mother, siblings, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, and first cousins. Beyond immediate kin, distant kin include all blood and marriage relations, no matter how distant. It is expected that an individual will know the names of all close kin, even if they do not live nearby. It is also very likely that they will know the names of distant kin, including second and third cousins. Maintaining awareness of the degrees of relatedness identifies the categories "of persons that the individual can rely on for support and assistance in both everyday activities as well as significant crises."²⁴

2. Friends and Enemies

The complexity of Tausug relationships increases beyond the realm of kinship and includes varying degrees of friends and enemies. "Friendship and enmity are the

²³ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 28.

²⁴ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 31.

pivotal concepts in the social organization of Tausug violence.”²⁵ The individual cannot defend his interests alone and has to rely on friends. Equally important, the individual must be aware of his enemy’s supporters before engaging in any act of violence. What the Tausugs mean by the term “friend,” therefore, is not what is implied by the western translation, which suggests a degree of emotional solidarity. Rather, friendship is a form of social contract—an agreement to help another in exchange for help received. The obligation is not legal but moral, and “sanctioned by the highest religious and ritual foundations of the society.”²⁶ As such, the ideal friend is considered to be as close as a kinsman in both conduct and reliability.

Kiefer identifies nine primary concepts in the Tausug domains of friendship and enmity, and describes the social conduct associated with these terms. The obligations associated with these terms cannot be overestimated, as they help to determine expected support in the event of a crisis:

1. *Bagay magtaymanghud* literally means “friends who act like brothers.”

This relationship is sanctioned religiously and legally, but does not always require that the decision to enter into this bond has to be mutual. In some cases, the decision may have been reached between headmen who want two rivals to stop fighting or otherwise seek an honorable means to end a feud. This relationship does not require an individual to provide any type of support, but denies him the right to inflict any type of violence.

2. *Bagay* (close friends) enter this bond willingly and often as a means of creating networks of obligation among friends. An individual with many close friends has a responsibility to each when his interests are at stake. At the same time the individual can count on mutual support from these many friends, especially when their interests are affected along with his.

²⁵ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 59.

²⁶ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 60.

Military leaders and headmen will often have a wide range of close friends as their interests extend well beyond the local community.

3. *Bagay-bagay* refers to a social contact, but one that creates no degree of obligation. At the same time, people in a *bagay-bagay* relationship do not regard each other as enemies.
4. *Gapi* means ally, and may actually refer to two individuals fighting side-by-side with no social obligation to each other, but who fight side-by-side out of obligation to other allied individuals. *Gapi* are not friends but they also are not enemies.
5. *Tau hansipak* are individuals allied to feuding individuals and enemies only due to an accidental configuration of alliances. There may not be any enmity between the two and they may not even fight in a social situation, unless one or both of their personal enemies are present.
6. *Bantah* are personal enemies and will likely try to kill each other if given the chance. This term also refers to a legal category in which the enmity is recognized and formal mediation necessary to end the enmity without bloodshed.
7. *Tau ha ut* are neutrals and may not be involved in a conflict. Women, children and the elderly are not expected to partake in violence and are *tau ha ut*. An individual may not participate in conflict because he has kinsmen or friends on both sides. An individual will not be condemned for refusing to partake in a conflict unless an immediate blood relative is involved.
8. *Tindug* are followers of a particular leader, whether a headman or religious leader. The more *tindug* an individual has, the greater his renown.

9. *Bata'an* are followers who serve as bodyguards. A Tausug headman will never leave his community without a number of bodyguards. These serve both to impress others, as well as to protect him.²⁷

It is possible, but rare, that an individual can be both a friend and kinsman. This may be true for distantly related kinsmen in different communities, but the value of kinship is ranked much higher than that of friendship. Therefore, friendship is really about reciprocity, especially as it applies to violent conflict. Levels and intensity of reciprocity can always increase, but can rarely decrease. To not live up to reciprocal obligations brings self-inflicted shame to the man in debt and insults the individual he owes. In the act of gift giving, this is especially important because a perceived slight can end an alliance, shatter a network of friendship ties, and/or result in a violent feud.

F. HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AND MALE VALUES

1. Causes for Conflict

Reciprocal gift giving is pervasive throughout Tausug society and involves commodities, services and sentiments. There are two distinct forms: quasi-contractual reciprocity, and a “debt of gratitude” (also known as *buddi*). Contractual reciprocity is very precise and records are kept that document the type of reciprocity and amounts exchanged. Such exchanges occur at social affairs, like weddings, and can include cooperative labor during planting and harvesting. In contrast, *Buddi* is a much more nebulous arrangement and is sometimes difficult to quantify. While the exchange may still be documented, a monetary value cannot easily be assigned to political support or military aid, for instance. Therefore, a man will always try to repay more than necessary, “increasing the obligation further in his partner in an ever increasing spiral of reciprocity.”²⁸

The debt of gratitude is expected to be repaid spontaneously and should never have to be demanded, except in extreme cases that involve anger towards the debtor. If a

²⁷ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 34–35.

²⁸ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 66.

debt is not repaid when needed, a deep sense of rejection develops and, with Tausugs, this will often lead to rage and anger. Failure to repay a debt of gratitude will force a feeling of shame on the individual and may create tension between kinsmen and/or between friends. If an individual is unable to repay the debt, he will likely avoid the person he owes in order to prevent the feeling of shame that may lead to a violent situation.

The pervasiveness of the sentiment of reciprocity in Tausug culture is further understood when we consider the importance of the value attached to vengeance, which is, after all, merely a special form of negative reciprocity in which men exchange hostile feelings that drive them apart instead of bring them together.²⁹

Like a debt of gratitude, vengeance, or a blood debt, must be repaid with interest, thereby shifting the burden of debt to the enemy. This creates an escalating spiral of violence that will eventually create a situation in which “legal pressures are brought to bear and end the feud.”³⁰ Failure to repay a blood debt, however, will also bring a deep sense of shame to the debtor.

Interestingly, the sense of shame is perceived only by the individual who failed to repay a debt; it cannot be externally applied. When an individual feels shame, he feels like he has lost esteem in the eyes of his relations and particularly in the eyes of his enemy. His image must be restored because “bravery and masculinity is a major facet of an adult male’s image of himself.”³¹ It is expected in Tausug society that a man should fight back against an enemy. Even if revenge is not successful, an individual can avoid shame by not backing down and therefore by not appearing cowardly in his relations or the enemy’s eyes. It is rare, however, that an individual will attempt to pay back a blood debt without bringing overwhelming support from kinsmen and friends.

²⁹ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 66.

³⁰ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 68.

³¹ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 68.

2. Alliances

Alliances are always formed for military purposes and generally include family and friends from the same community. Alliance groups are usually formed around a charismatic figure and only coalesce for a particular situation. The most common form of alliance is for the defense of the community. Long-term alliances are held together by charismatic leaders and, therefore, last only as long as the leader can maintain them, often dissipating once he is gone from the scene. Membership in an alliance goes beyond participating in a feud and includes the lending of weapons or assistance with the purchase of weapons and ammunition, as well as help with protecting the community and demonstrating support for a headman.

Alliances formed beyond the community are rare and are often limited to a particular situation. An alliance group leader with a cause broader than his community may seek assistance from distant kinsmen and friends belonging to alliance groups in other communities. Alliance groups that respond to his request must be accommodated and provided with food, money, or resources for as long as they offer their support, and the leader needs assistance. This is one reason alliance groups rarely form beyond an individual's community. One exception may be a hasty alliance that comes together in response to a particularly "heinous moral outrage" that impels all members to unite and respond against the transgressor. Historical examples of this are communities uniting against colonial control of Jolo.

Alliances beyond the community are very unstable and may shift often. It is not uncommon for groups to fight for a particular cause and then on opposite sides later for a different cause. As noted earlier, an alliance may be torn apart when a blood debt arises between two friends, and family and friends then find themselves having to reevaluate their relationships to each of the parties. This can lead to new alliances, as well as new enmities. Two enemies may unite on behalf of a common cause if its significance supersedes their feud. Such a cause may even end the feud, thereby eliminating the possibility of endless feuds that would ultimately pit everyone against everyone.

3. Risk-Taking and Adolescent Males

“Risk taking in Tausug culture is encouraged, and the prudent lose the opportunity to demonstrate to their fellows valued virtues of character: bravado, honor, masculinity, and even magnanimity.”³² As such, a Tausug man may deliberately seek high-risk situations. Piracy and banditry are both long-accepted historical forms of risk-taking in Tausug society and complement the risks involved in blood feuds. Tausugs have been noted historically for their military prowess and bravery in battle. Certainly not all Tausugs enjoy fighting, but “for the young fighting is the supreme adventure.”³³

Tausug society draws a separation between what it expects from, and allows the young and what it permits the old. “Young men are supposed to be hot blooded, violent, adventuresome, and—within the context of Islamic morality—“bad,” while the old are supposed to be peaceful, religiously inclined, and “good.””³⁴ It is to be expected, then, that young Tausug men will readily assist kinsmen and friends in need of aid, especially when there is the threat of violence. The dots should not be hard to connect between “traditional” Tausug values and the lure of the ASG. Where there is an intriguing wrinkle is in Tausugs’ expectation that only older men and heads of household need to engage in “good” Muslim behavior. This suggests that maybe a different kind of Muslim education needs to be done or new male only status competitions for young males might be introduced. Before examining these possibilities in greater detail, the next chapter examines current U.S. and GRP policy on Jolo.

³² Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 83.

³³ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 137.

³⁴ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 137.

IV. THE JOLO COUNTERINSURGENCY MISSION

A. THE JOLO MISSION

1. U.S. Strategy

Current strategy for Jolo differs from the earlier Basilan strategy due to concerns about local inhabitants' perceptions of U.S. intent. On Basilan, a large number of U.S. forces were used to advise and assist the Philippine Security Forces (PSF) as they executed their mission against the ASG. Because the Jolo inhabitants were suspicious of the U.S., the U.S. presence was designed to be small to dispel any rumors the U.S. was secretly after Spanish treasure or World War II era Japanese gold. With such a small number of U.S. advisors, it was necessary to devise an indirect strategy to secure and stabilize the island of Jolo, improve the impoverished conditions, and enhance the legitimacy of the GRP. This strategy consisted of four main objectives: 1) counter the terrorists'/insurgents' ability to discredit the GRP; 2) promote the legitimacy of the government by improving its ability to rule effectively and assist it demonstrate that ability to the people; 3) improve the GRP's ability to target the terrorist groups; and 4) improve the ability of the GRP to demonstrate control and provide a secure and prosperous environment for the population.³⁵

This was the JSOTF-P mission statement for Sulu:

JSOTF-P, in coordination with the U.S. country team, builds capacity and strengthens the Republic of the Philippines security forces to defeat selected terrorist organizations in order to protect Philippine and American citizens and interests from terrorist attack while preserving Philippine sovereignty (Approved by COMSOPAC on 23 Aug 05).³⁶

a. Indirect Approach

Also known as "through, by and with," then-Brigadier General Donald Wurster and Colonel David Friedovich developed an indirect strategy for the OEF-P

³⁵ Jonathon P. Hastings, "The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting it Right in the Philippines," Master's Thesis (Naval Postgraduate School, December 2008), 80.

³⁶ David Maxwell, "JSOTF-P Commander's Overview Brief" Ft Bragg, 23 February 2008. Document stored in the NPS, DA Department CORE Lab archives.

mission, based on principles borrowed from Gordon McCormick's Diamond Model.³⁷ A variety of factors influenced the adoption of this approach, but most importantly was the restriction of foreign forces engaging in combat on Philippine soil. As a result, the JSOTF-P could only advise and assist the PSF in their efforts against the ASG; it could not engage in combat operations. To accomplish this task, the JSOTF-P worked closely with the U.S. country team to facilitate regular interagency coordination to produce optimal results.³⁸ Applying the principles from the Diamond Model, and working within the political constraints of the Philippines, four lines of operations were developed for the island of Jolo.

b. Four Lines of Operations

(1) Building the Capacity of the PSF. This approach was expanded beyond the earlier focus on just the AFP, and included the PNP as well as other security forces operating on Jolo. The PSF had to demonstrate to the inhabitants on Jolo that it was capable of establishing a secure and stable environment. Capacity building included advising and assisting ground units as well as maritime and aviation components.³⁹

(2) Targeted Civil Military Operations (CMO). On Jolo, this consisted of U.S.-facilitated, but Philippine-led humanitarian and civic-action projects. The projects were targeted in the sense that they focused on populations that were most influenced by the ASG. Not only were the projects designed to demonstrate the GRP's concern for the population's well-being and quality of life, but also to provide incentives to encourage inhabitants to reduce ties with the ASG.

(3) Intelligence Operations. The JSOTF-P worked closely with its AFP counterparts to improve their intelligence capabilities. It also shared U.S. capabilities so as to enhance the analysis and dissemination of vital intelligence to the

³⁷ Gregory Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach," *Military Review*, Nov-Dec 2006, 4. In 1994, Dr. Gordon McCormick created the triangle insurgent/COIN model. He later created the Diamond Model to capture the interaction with external international actors.

³⁸ Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN," 6.

³⁹ Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN," 6.

appropriate organization. Doing so created a better understanding of the enemy situation on Jolo and encouraged the sharing of information across organizations, thereby increasing the likelihood of operational success.

(4) Information Operations (IO). IO focused on the GRP success in the first two lines of operations. Using a variety of means, information regarding civil-military activities and PSF successes against the ASG was spread across the island, enhancing GRP legitimacy and dispelling ASG propaganda regarding GRP intentions on Jolo.

2. GRP Legitimacy

Until the population of Jolo accepts the GRP as the legitimate governing body over Jolo, GRP success is always likely to be short-lived, whether against the ASG or in the development of Jolo. The long and bloody history of resistance by the people of Jolo has created a deep resentment against any authority imposing its will over the island's inhabitants. The GRP's fight against insurgent and terrorist forces on Jolo has exacted a heavy price. Prior to U.S. involvement on Jolo, Major General Juancho Sabban of the AFP stated in an interview:

For three decades we were using a strategy of force. It turned out to be a vicious cycle. We would have body count syndrome. Commanders would become popular because they were warrior-like. But I saw the more we destroyed, the more the number of the enemy increased. There were so many instances of collateral damage and innocent lives being sacrificed. Just by passing through fields with so many battalions we were already stomping on crops and that makes people resent the military. In the course of a firefight school buildings would get burned, houses would be razed to the ground, civilians caught in the crossfire. Everything was blamed on the military.⁴⁰

Since the arrival of U.S. forces on Jolo, a strategy that measures the effects of operations on the population has gained dominance. Engagements are discriminate and even surgical. This underscores GRP concern for the well-being of Jolo's inhabitants. It is now appreciated that respect for Jolo property and the lives of inhabitants, coupled

⁴⁰ Max Boot and Richard Bennett, "Treading Softly in the Philippines: Why a low-intensity counterinsurgency strategy seems to be working there," *Weekly Standard*, January 9, 2009, 14-16.

with increased security and development across the island, are essential if the GRP hopes to legitimize authority on Jolo. In a zero sum type relationship, as the GRP's legitimacy increases, it can be expected that the ASG's legitimacy will decrease. As a result, the PSF can expect an increased flow of information from the local inhabitants and greater cooperation in development projects, replacing the vicious cycle of violence and poverty with a "virtuous" cycle of cooperation and development.

B. SECURITY

1. PSF Capacity Building

The AFP has to be able to provide a secure and stable environment as the front-line force against the ASG. Technologically, the AFP is extremely deficient compared to its U.S. counterparts. However, significant advancements have been made in the AFP's execution of operations through military cooperation with U.S. forces as well as through Subject Matter Expertise Exchanges (SMEE). SMEEs are conducted with the assistance of U.S. advisors and are designed to improve the tactical and operational effectiveness of the AFP, improve the AFP's technical proficiency, and create a more professional fighting force.

Basic soldiering skills such as marksmanship, first-aid, and navigation, along with small unit tactics at the squad and platoon level are key to enhancing the proficiency of the front-line AFP units. Better mission planning and intelligence analysis has increased the capabilities of small unit leaders as well as staffs at the battalion level and higher. As the AFP's capabilities have increased, its effectiveness against the ASG has also increased and the ASG's power over the population has diminished.

2. The MNLF Threat

Critical to the AFP's effort on Jolo has been eliminating any possible MNLF support to the ASG. To accomplish this, the AFP used Marine Colonel Dolorfino, a Sulu native and Muslim, to contact MNLF commanders on Jolo and encourage their support for the 1996 Peace Agreement between the GRP and MNLF. The GRP also negotiated with the captured leader of the MNLF, Nur Misuari, to gain his continued support for the

peace agreement despite military operations on Jolo in pursuit of the ASG. In the end, MNLF support was secured by the GRP and MNLF were voluntarily moved to no-fire zones on the island.⁴¹

C. DEVELOPMENT

1. The Value of Civil Military Operations

While the PSF continues to target the ASG through military means, development of Jolo's infrastructure and economy has proceeded simultaneously. Providing security for the island's inhabitants increases the legitimacy of the GRP, but is not the long-term solution. The GRP must create an environment that will permanently discourage the growth of new insurgent leaders capable of destabilizing Jolo and inhibiting investment and development. The AFP has been using Civil-Military Operations (CMO) in conjunction with its tactical operations to diminish or eliminate support of the ASG through highly publicized livelihood enhancement projects. The U.S. provides a significant amount of monetary and material support to the AFP for execution of CMO.

The U.S. country team in the Philippines works very closely with the U.S. forces operating on Jolo to plan and execute a variety of development and livelihood improvement projects. This uncommon cooperation between Department of State and Department of Defense assets occurs thanks to a campaign plan that establishes near-term strategies to both defeat the ASG and provide immediate relief, as well as to create long-term solutions to encourage development on Jolo and sever the ASG's control over the island's inhabitants. While the U.S. plays a critical role in the CMO aspect of AFP operations on Jolo, the actual execution of the many projects is done by Filipinos, thereby helping to emphasize the role of the GRP in promoting local development.

2. Humanitarian Assistance

Many Humanitarian Assistance (HA) projects are designed to provide immediate relief and deliver short-term consequences. Long-term results, however, can still come from the execution of small HA projects. Providing materials to repair a school roof, for

⁴¹ Hastings, "The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm," 85.

example, costs very little and is an immediate demonstration of AFP concern for the well-being of children on Jolo. A project like this also makes a new classroom available which may in turn provide an employment opportunity for a new teacher, reduce class sizes, and increase the quality of education students receive. The immediate impact legitimizes GRP efforts on Jolo, at the same time it creates new opportunities for a better future.

In this way, the AFP executes a variety of small but potentially high impact projects with the support of U.S. material and money. Whether engaging in infrastructure development by repairing schools, wells, or clinics, or targeting the population directly through medical or veterinary assistance, U.S. and AFP CMO planners work together on Jolo to plan and execute projects that influence target populations and areas. Doing so ensures resources are dedicated to the communities with the greatest need with the aim of achieving long lasting effects in return. Maximizing the effects legitimizes further AFP operations within the targeted population or area, and also sets a foundation for future development.

3. Infrastructure Development

Addressing long-term development more directly poses a greater challenge on Jolo. While many projects can be executed using military resources, the risk to security inhibits larger projects that are often beyond the capacity of the military to execute and that require cooperation from civilian agencies. Security risks also prevent the participation of people capable of making long-term investments on Jolo such as business entrepreneurs, educators, or medical professionals. Without investment in non-military development, however, there is the potential that Jolo will be stuck in a continuous cycle of poverty and instability.

As on Basilan, a great deal of emphasis is being placed on the transportation infrastructure on Jolo. Improving the road networks can serve many purposes that assist both the military and encourage development. Improved access, for instance, allows PSF to gain access to and influence previously isolated populations. Isolated communities will also benefit from improved access to education, medical care, and markets. The

“farms to markets” campaign, introduced in 2005 on Jolo, was developed specifically to improve access to markets and encourage rural farmers to grow surplus crops that can be sold to earn them more income.⁴²

Other projects executed on Jolo include new wells to improve access to clean drinking water, training for medical providers, new clinics, and new schools to improve learning opportunities. But, in many cases, these projects are not sustainable without improved security. Not only are wells easy to destroy, but they also require routine maintenance, if they are to continue running properly. Schools can only function if there are teachers. Many teachers on Jolo live in Jolo Town, far from the villages they teach in and are, thus, under constant threat of being kidnapped because they have no kinship ties to the members of the communities in which they teach. Medical care providers are influenced by similar threats. Despite the construction of clinics in rural villages, there is no one trained to maintain the clinics or the equipment in them. Many medical providers also only rotate through villages. Few are willing to live in the impoverished conditions on Jolo and may serve only a short time on the island.

⁴² The campaign for “farms to markets” roads across Jolo was encouraged by military planners during the author’s time on Jolo in 2006. Not only did the improved road network benefit the Jolo residents but they also permitted greater access by security forces to remote communities, thereby, reducing safe haven for rebels.

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V. ADOLESCENT MALES IN TAUSUG SOCIETY

A. MALE ROLE

1. Common in All Societies

Throughout history and in nearly every society that has been documented, males have held positions of power and influence. This is not to say that females have been incapable of holding such positions, but that they are historically held by males. Even today, while females participate in economics, politics, religion, and academia, their degree of influence may be overestimated. In America, for example, it is widely thought that females wield considerable influence. In fact, only 16% of elected seats in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are held by women.⁴³

One particular role that continues to be dominated by males is that of warfare. Of course, females occupy roles within militaries, command soldiers, and even obtain high rank. But when decisive action involving combat must be taken, this role belongs almost exclusively to males. One sees this not just in the military application of warfare, but in areas of political influence as well. According to some anthropologists, the physical evolution of males has predisposed them to be better at executing violence than females. Consequently – the argument goes – males have been able to dominate the roles described above.⁴⁴

2. Muslim Society

Within Muslim societies, males are even more dominant in the public sphere. Not only are political, military and economic positions dominated by males, but many Muslims believe men have a right to dominate thanks to the dictates of their religion. The woman's place is carefully restricted, even in states where women do hold elected positions of authority. Meanwhile, so long as males who believe this continue to hold positions of authority within Islam and preach this interpretation, and so long as women

⁴³ Onlinewomeninpolitics.org, http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmnmap08_en.pdf (accessed on November 21, 2009).

⁴⁴ Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups*, (Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, 2009, Third Edition), 84.

in Muslim societies accept this interpretation as valid, then males in Muslim societies will continue to dominate most roles in the public sphere. How Islam is interpreted in a particular society and how it is enforced is particularly important. While there still are no recognized female roles within Islam for preaching or teaching Islam, different societies do value and tolerate contributions by females to social life very differently.⁴⁵

3. Tausug Society

In traditional Tausug society, all public roles of authority and influence were held by males. While this was in part due to the influence of Islam on Tausug society, it was also due to the acephalous nature of the social structure with no clearly defined or permanent hierarchy of leaders and constantly shifting patterns of loyalty. A 'headman' was the most common leadership role in Tausug communities. But the status of a headman could shift quickly and a family friendly to the headman one day could become his enemy the next. As such, the threat of violence pervaded all aspects of social decision making.

Ironically, while Islam's influence in Tausug society constrained the public role of females, adolescent males were not bound by Islam's influence until well into adulthood. While it was not encouraged, it is not surprising that young men would seek their fortunes through banditry and piracy, or would kidnap young brides and engage in harrowing adventures to achieve status.⁴⁶

B. WHEN A MAN CAN BE A MAN

1. Warfare

As has already been noted, warfare is the exclusive domain of Tausug males. This is common in most modern societies and particularly those influenced by Islam. Warfare in Tausug society has been a common and deadly occurrence, particularly since

⁴⁵ Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi *Hadith Literature: Its Origins, Development & Special Features published by Islamic Texts Society* (Cambridge, 1993) 142-153. Dr. Siddiqi's text provides historical references to the many female, Muslim scholars through history and highlights their value to the spread of Islam. Siddiqi, however, does not provide one example of a female performing religious rites in Islam.

⁴⁶ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 43, 83.

the arrival of firearms which have been abundant since World War II. As such, headmen have taken on a greater role in settling disputes before they become violent.

Traditionally, internal aggression was inhibited in Tausug society, particularly amongst close kin. Therefore, it was only natural that males focused their aggression externally.⁴⁷ The Tausugs are infamous for their pirate raids throughout the Sulu Archipelago, capturing slaves, livestock and other valuables. What is most important to note is that in every case, whether involving banditry, piracy, or warfare between communities, all ventures were exclusively the domain of Tausug males. There is no history of famous female pirates or family leaders. This is not to say women in Tausug society were without influence, but in the realm of warfare, women have been wholly excluded.

2. Crime

A Western interpretation of crime may not accurately fit with a Tausug interpretation; crime in the Western sense amounts to what Tausugs would consider a form of reciprocity. A Tausug male who feels disaffected with his current lot in life will feel justified in engaging in crime to better his situation. As described by anthropologist Lionel Tiger, the criminal act is the individual's "mastery of the environment through criminal means."⁴⁸ So long as the act is acceptable to society and until a headman steps in to resolve the situation, there may be an ever-escalating series of criminal acts between individuals or even communities. This is as true for cases of accidentally killing someone else's livestock as it is of killing a family member.

Banditry and piracy fit this same pattern of acceptance. To avoid the risk of affecting nearby communities, bandits or pirates often travel far from their own communities. This prevents the accidental creation of animosity between neighboring communities that will unintentionally disrupt or put the lives of pirate families at risk. Among Tausugs, crime is very much the realm of young males. It provides an opportunity for them to gain status and/or wealth, both of which are necessary for gaining

⁴⁷ Tiger, *Men in Groups*, 190.

⁴⁸ Tiger, *Men in Groups*, 174.

influence within their respective communities or for attracting a bride. As with warfare, females are discouraged from lives of crime, but unlike in warfare females are not protected from crime. Women, children and the elderly can never be targeted in warfare; it is shameful to do so. But females can be targeted by crime – but with severe penalties if the male perpetrator is brought to justice.⁴⁹

3. Politics

Much like the social and family organization of Tausug society, Tausug politics can be confusing and fluid. One constant, however, is that politics remained the exclusive domain of males. Traditionally, headmen were not chosen or elected officials. They assumed leadership and authority through their influence over their communities. Because females were not afforded opportunities for significant social interaction outside their communities, they had no means to develop relations that led them to be able to influence others outside their households. Females stayed relatively close to home while males traveled for work, trade, or even warfare.⁵⁰

The more social interactions a male had outside his community, the more influence he was likely to have in other communities. Relationships were developed through kinship and friendship and strengthened through routine interactions. These bonds could be further strengthened through forms of reciprocity. An individual seeking to gain the loyalty and support of surrounding communities would demonstrate his loyalty through acts of generosity and friendship, thereby accumulating indebted dependents. Ultimately, a male would accumulate a loyal following of kinsmen and friends and could then, if he so chose, challenge the authority of a local headman or assume the role himself upon a headman's death.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 38.

⁵⁰ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 91.

⁵¹ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 92.

C. DECLINING MALE ROLES ON JOLO

1. Government Intervention in Male Politics

In pursuing the ASG on Jolo, the GRP risks alienating the population. It is no secret that the ASG provides a safe haven to JI terrorists who must be captured or killed and, as such, the collateral death of Tausugs will likely harm relations between the victims' families and the GRP. It must also be accepted that interfering in internal politics will likewise alienate the population. By forcing an alien, hierarchical form of leadership on Jolo's inhabitants, the GRP, as well as the colonial authorities before it, have divided Tausug society and denied authority to traditional leaders.

This is not meant to be a criticism of the current efforts to establish an effective governing body on Jolo but to identify the fissures created in Tausug society through the replacement of traditional systems of governance. Headmen with years of influence and authority over their communities may be forced to defer to elected leaders with no prior social relations in the affected community. One example from the author's experience will highlight the detrimental effects of trying to introduce this alien form of organization.

The municipality of Talipao is comprised of approximately 53 barangays, or communities. Municipal mayors and barangay captains are elected from each corresponding constituency. However, borders between communities are not fixed. Therefore, an influential family, perhaps one closely tied to the mayor, can claim residence in a neighboring barangay in an attempt to gain a political seat. In the case in question, a barangay captain was elected to govern a barangay in which he had no social relations, either through kinship or friendship. How this particular captain won the election was a mystery to members of the barangay who, it is important to note, were historically opposed to the elected municipal mayor. Worse, the elected barangay captain received all funds from the government dedicated to the maintenance and operation of the barangay, which the local headmen claimed they never saw. The most striking point is that the barangay captain, like the municipal mayor, moved off the island of Jolo to the city of Zamboanga on Mindanao. Not only was his particular barangay thus governed in

absentia, but so was the entire municipality. During the author's eight-month visit to Talipao in 2006, the mayor returned to the island of Jolo only once and, on that occasion, never visited the municipality but instead stayed in Jolo Town.

It should not be difficult to imagine what effect this GRP-initiated form of governance might have on the local population, particularly on males in traditional positions of authority. The above example illustrates the difficulties with implementing a new system of governance. Traditional male authority figures can become increasingly desperate as they see their way of life rapidly changing through the unwanted influence of a new government system that not only strips away their influence, but supplants it with the authority of non-traditional Tausug leaders.

2. Rising Role of the Female

In addition to male authority being eroded in this way, it is also under threat as females receive greater access to education. Females are beginning to fill roles commonly occupied by males in traditional Tausug society. Females, after all, are not expected to behave badly in their teen years and, therefore, benefit from completing school, as opposed to running off and getting into trouble. This assertion is supported by a 1994 educational survey in which females led males in levels of education completed by as little as 3% and as much as 6%. By 2003, according to another survey, the basic literacy rate of females versus males was 2.2% higher for ages 10–14 and 4.6% higher for ages 15–19.⁵² Most remarkable is that when you look longitudinally, males received considerably more education and had a much higher literacy rate only a generation or two prior.

As females continue to advance in education, they are bound to assume roles once reserved exclusively for males. For instance, secular schools established by the government are no longer run by Muslim male teachers and are predominately staffed by female teachers, particularly at the primary and intermediate education levels. Nursing and clerical positions are dominated by females as well. Tausug mothers can raise

⁵² National Statistics Office, Republic of the Philippines, <http://www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/2003/fl03tabD.htm> (accessed August 26, 2009).

children, as well as hold a job, and single women can bring home additional income to their families that they likely would not be able to when they marry at too young an age. While occupational opportunities available to women may not compare to the more high-prestige roles associated with male leadership in Tausug society, these new roles increase female influence at the expense of male influence. As males fail to fill these roles of influence, it is only natural that they will seek opportunities that re-privilege traditional roles of Tausug males.⁵³

3. Female Focused Development

It goes without saying that to improve development there must be advances in education. In traditional Tausug society, females did not receive much formal education, but they are the recipients of a greater focus on education in Jolo today. Being educated means females are aware of choices and can make informed decisions regarding health, child rearing, and social interaction. This benefits Tausug society because females raise healthier children and are likely to encourage their children to become educated as well. Statistics indicate that improved health and education is having a positive impact through a decrease in infant and mother mortality rates, higher levels of education completed (especially for females, as we have seen), and longer predicted life spans.

But even if future generations of young males are successfully encouraged to complete school, what is available to them after schooling? Without development that provides opportunities that fit with the prestige and status males feel they need to earn as Tausug males, adolescent males will be left to seek this on their own.⁵⁴ When one takes into account the traditional Tausug acceptance that young men will behave badly, then having a healthier, better educated, but disaffected *and* unemployed cohort of young males could create a new generation of potential insurgents ripe for recruitment.

⁵³ During the author's visit to Jolo in 2006, he interacted with females serving as teachers, doctors and elected officials.

⁵⁴ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 137.

D. WHAT MAKES THE ASG SO ATTRACTIVE

1. Financial Gain

The province of Sulu is the poorest province in the Philippines and, despite Jolo being the provincial capital, it fares no better than the rest of the Sulu Archipelago. As already discussed, centuries of warfare and insurgency have minimized investment on Jolo and inhibited economic development. Limited resources and land mean there are limited opportunities for adolescent males to either earn an income or status. Without legitimate opportunities for financial gain, males may feel forced or enticed to seek out illicit opportunities. The ASG's involvement in so many profit-driven illicit activities makes the organization an effective option for those needing to earn an income. The risk of associating with the ASG would certainly be readily acceptable by adolescent males seeking fortune and adventure. And, with little emphasis on Islam for this particular age group, adolescent males would likely feel little sense of regret or remorse for their involvement.

Adolescent males may find joining the ASG even easier if they believe their plight is a result of the government's failure to improve their situation. In such cases, disaffected males become ideal recruits for the ASG. Not only can the ASG help men to financially improve their lot in life, but they would be joining an organization that allows them to take from the very people they hold responsible for their situation. While representatives of the GRP would be obvious targets, it can be equally easily argued that taking from Christians or foreigners is justified since neither are Tausug and both appear to be exploiting Jolo for their gain and not for the betterment of Tausugs.

2. Status

The fact that adolescent males seek to achieve some degree of status is common in all societies.⁵⁵ Tausug society is no different. Not only is status important to teenagers, but it is equally valuable as a teen matures into manhood. Leadership in traditional Tausug society is based on acquired status; the greater your status the greater

⁵⁵ Tiger, *Men in Groups*, 84, 172.

your influence and betterment for your family. The warrior tradition of the Tausugs puts heavy emphasis on status achieved through bravery in battle.⁵⁶

If an adolescent male has no opportunity in legitimate society to achieve status, then the ASG offers an avenue for attaining status in keeping with traditional Tausug values. Some males may choose to join or help the ASG to impress family, friends and/or especially females.⁵⁷ Others may be impacted by the depressed economic conditions, and therefore seek fame and fortune from the only means available outside legitimate society. The most dangerous potential recruits, however, may be those disaffected youth who truly want to achieve status through legitimate means, but have no opportunity for advanced education or employment. In such cases, individuals will be drawn to the ASG's initial *raison d'être* or they may come to believe they can advance their cause *as well as* the Tausug people's cause through participation in ASG activities. The disaffected adolescent males in today's Tausug society can become the future ideologues who bring the ASG back from profit-driven activities to those focused on an Islamist agenda.

3. The Thrill of Danger

Being a male, in general, involves some degree of emphasis on physical bravery.⁵⁸ The emphasis correlates with the value a society places on bravery. Traditional Tausug society placed a great deal of emphasis on physical bravery that then evolved into the Tausug warrior tradition. Boys are inculcated at a young age with the idea of facing danger bravely and are spared from Islamic traditions that would prohibit an adolescent male from taking risks and seeking danger. To return to Lionel Tiger's point, facing danger offers an opportunity for mastery of the environment, along with possible rewards of status and/or wealth.

⁵⁶ Kiefer, *The Tausug*, 83.

⁵⁷ Anna Simons, "Axis of Trouble: Male Youth, Factional Politics and Religion," Long-term strategy project, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, September 2005, 11.

⁵⁸ Tiger, *Men in Groups*, 182.

Seeking out danger also fills an adolescent male's need for self-validation.⁵⁹ Young males will seek out and attach themselves to figures or role models who they respect or seek to be like. Adolescent males everywhere daydream about adventure, excitement, fame, and wealth, all of which can be offered by the ASG. Participation in an organization such as the ASG enables adolescent males to break societal taboos by, for example, using guns and drugs, and gives them the opportunity to show their bravery and achieve status among their superiors and peers.

E. CAN ADOLESCENT MALES BE DETERRED

1. Revival of the Tausug Identity

As critical as economic investment is to changing the conditions of poverty and insecurity on Jolo, the island's inhabitants also need to sustain their Tausug identity. How to encourage this without it leading to resistance against the GRP presents a real challenge. Little is being done by traditional Tausug leaders to mobilize the Tausugs. While armed struggle against government authority is rational given the Tausugs' self-image as a warrior society, Tausugs today need to realize the value of a unified Tausug people determined to better their collective lives. Some form of Jolo-wide service could potentially be a mobilizing force capable of changing the development and security situation on Jolo.

While assigned to Jolo in 2006, an Army team of advisors witnessed how quickly local civilians could be mobilized for labor projects.⁶⁰ The Tausug locals were paid no more than \$3 (U.S.) a day for their labor, but proved both capable and accustomed to any manner of physical work. Initially, the locals were hired to push the jungle back from the AFP camp perimeter. They worked diligently and took great pride in putting in a full eight to ten hours every day. By engaging the locals in this way, the American advisors and their AFP counterparts identified a method that would not only provide income to Tausug males, but that enabled them to interact with the Tausugs on a fair and routine

⁵⁹ Tiger, *Men in Groups*, 183.

⁶⁰ The author cites this example from personal experience during his visit to Jolo in 2006.

basis. A variety of projects were subsequently planned that required extensive manual labor with the idea these would benefit the locals following completion of the projects.

For instance, males from many barangays formed work parties under AFP supervision and cleared the dense jungle vegetation along the roads and trails throughout the area. When gravel was provided, again the local males pitched in to improve the roads. In just this one example, small communities were connected to larger communities both through the work, but also the finished project which worked to increase communications as well as access to markets. Security forces and medical providers also gained greater access to the once isolated communities, strengthening relations and improving livelihoods. The benefits of such road improvement projects were immediate *and* long-term, and were enjoyed by the local Tausugs as well as the government's PSF.

While the projects were not designed to be long-term work projects, they were designed to organize Tausugs to improve their own local environment. In some cases, the local Tausug leadership would routinely organize work parties to sustain the work completed. In these cases, those in the work parties were volunteers. Presumably these were Tausugs who appreciated the benefits gained from the work and desired to maintain the project or improve it. Clearly, then, it should be possible to organize Tausugs at a larger level to conduct public work projects across Jolo. A variety of approaches could be used. Public service might be one option for youth not engaged in school or seeking opportunities beyond high school.

Public service encourages male youth to take part in bettering their lot in life as well as the lives of the rest of the inhabitants on Jolo. In addition to the many valuable lessons learned through hard work and accomplishment, training and education can be incorporated to reinforce the values of Tausug society as well as prepare young males for potential future employment. While the example above illustrates how volunteers can be mobilized at no cost, paying adolescent males a minimum wage not only satisfies a need for income, but provides that income at no risk compared to *not* granting young males access to spending money which only encourages them to acquire it through illicit means. Offering a means by which young males can earn money would provide one much

needed improvement in domestic security on Jolo. As the effects of a public service organization became more visible or tangible across Jolo, a sense of national pride would develop not just among the adolescent males involved, but ideally across the island of Jolo among all Tausugs.⁶¹

2. Government over Insurgency

How else can the GRP make the ASG unattractive to the Jolo Tausugs? That is, can it effectively sever the link between the ASG and the population without winning Tausug hearts and minds? It will likely take years before the GRP will be viewed as the legitimate government in Jolo by the Tausugs. But the GRP only needs to be slightly more attractive than the ASG. The risk attached to supporting or joining the ASG is high, as was demonstrated in 2006 when the PSF aggressively pursued and killed many ASG, bringing their estimated total down to fewer than 400.⁶² But, it also shouldn't be forgotten that the risk associated with participation is also what keeps *attracting* new recruits and winning support (even if only tacit) from the population. Thus, it is not enough to sever the ASG's influence over the population.

A great deal of effort continues to be expended to win the hearts and minds of the Tausug population and, with patience, this will likely make a difference. But for this to stick will require that Jolo be developed in a way that will provide greater opportunities for adolescent males overall. Actions must be taken that will encourage investment on Jolo specifically designed to give adolescent males opportunity to achieve status or wealth with just enough "risk" to prevent them from wanting to join an illicit or insurgent organization. Meaningful employment that provides income above the poverty line *and* offers a chance for advancement should be much more appealing than being tracked down by the PSF.

Emphasis on the high risk of joining the ASG is critical to reducing recruitment, especially if it can be paired with the right kind of development efforts by the GRP. Programs are currently in place that provide alternative livelihoods and teach new skills,

⁶¹ Simons, "Axis of Trouble," 44.

⁶² Chalk, "US Security Assistance," 7 and Adams, "In Basilan."

but affect only a small portion of the Jolo population. During the Huk Rebellion of the 1950s, the GRP expended the effort to relocate surrendered or captured rebels, teach them a new way of life, and give them land or business loans to enable them to pursue that legitimate new life. While what was offered may not have been ideal for everything the rebels hoped for, it provided them a means of livelihood that was more appealing than the risk of armed rebellion, especially when they had families to support. Tausugs do not need to love the GRP, but life must be just good enough to deter thoughts of rebellion or a life of crime.

3. Social Clubs

Social clubs (and associations) provide opportunities for people to communicate, share experiences, and develop relations.⁶³ Social clubs tailored to adolescent males on Jolo can accomplish the same ends, but do so at the expense of ASG recruitment if membership in the club offers equal or greater satisfaction than membership in the ASG. It was noted above that the ASG offers excitement and holds allure for adolescent males because of the all-male social interactions involved, as well as the potential to achieve higher status.⁶⁴ Alternative organizations can be developed that focus the attention and energy of adolescent males in a more productive, but equally compelling manner.

Social organizations exist in Jolo Town in the form of school, athletic, and academic programs. Expanding these throughout the island is an ideal way to both encourage social networking outside common community relations and to also encourage a healthy competition among adolescents that also leads to pride and a sense of accomplishment. Athletic and academic competitions are but two approaches. Organizations could also mobilize adolescent males for the benefit of Tausug society.

For instance, adolescent males who intend to stay near home and maintain traditional farms can benefit from organizations that emphasize agricultural or veterinary

⁶³ Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, (New York: MacMillan Co., 1910), 342-370 and SparkNotes Editors, "SparkNote on Social Groups and Organizations," SparkNotes LLC. 2006. <http://www.sparknotes.com/sociology/social-groups-and-organizations/> (accessed December 10, 2009). Both citations provide historic and modern examples and need for social clubs and associations.

⁶⁴ Simons, "Axis of Trouble," 11.

advancement. Perhaps clubs could replicate the Future Farmers of America or 4 H, and could foster culturally appropriate, healthy competitions and contests among those raising livestock or produce. Maybe adolescents could then 'mature' to joining granges. Associations of this sort would not only offer adolescent males opportunities to achieve status through healthy competition, but would help steer them toward improving traditional occupations like farming that would in turn improve the lot of Tausugs in general.

With the security of Jolo constantly in question, the AFP would be well-positioned to develop and organize social organizations alongside local Tausug leaders until the situation is secure enough for civilians to assist. An AFP partnership with the Tausug communities would reduce barriers and increase trust. Adolescent males who have a positive experience with the AFP and who benefit from a social organization the AFP helps sponsor should have less interest in then participating in an organization focused on insurgent or illicit activity. Active GRP or AFP participation in Tausug society would also demonstrate that the future of Jolo matters to Manila and that together all level of government can work to make a difference.

VI. CONCLUSION

The ASG represents a national insurgent threat with global potential. The organization has shown its deadly capability against the GRP and U.S. forces operating in the Philippines. The ASG's Islamist history and ties to Al Qaeda through the JI make the ASG a relevant threat to U.S. interests abroad and to the security of the Philippines. While the ASG does enjoy external support it is still a nationalist movement whose primary focus is an independent Muslim state in the Sulu Archipelago. To effectively counter the ASG's influence on Jolo and sever its ties with the population it is critical to better understand the Tausug people, the primary recruitment and support base for the ASG.

The Tausugs still maintain many traditions from their celebrated past. Influenced by Islam for over 700 years, but holding on to many non-Muslim traditions, the Tausugs have resisted domination by foreign colonizers for nearly 500 years. Following Philippine independence in 1946, the Tausugs continued to resist control by the Christian-dominated government. No Tausug considers himself a Filipino, but rather a Tausug and Muslim first. Many insurgent organizations have emerged in the Muslim-dominated southern Philippines seeking independence. On the Tausug-dominated Jolo Island, the ASG continues to resist GRP authority. Although most of the ASG's current operations are profit-driven illicit activities, its survival can be attributed to the strong family ties of the Tausug people. As with many counterinsurgencies, then, effort must focus on severing the ties between the ASG and the Tausug population.

The U.S. has worked closely with the GRP since 2002 to target and destroy the ASG and its Islamist supporters, the JI. While the U.S.-supported AFP has had significant success in reducing the number of active ASG, the AFP is also working diligently to secure Jolo and encourage development through non-kinetic military operations. An unprecedented amount of cooperation between U.S. forces and the U.S. country team in Manila has contributed large sums of money and resources to aid the AFP in its efforts. Some projects, however, lack long term goals or are not sustainable by the local population. Many projects fail to target the primary recruitment base for the

ASG and the link that binds the organization to the Tausug population, and to the ASG's ultimate pool of potential recruits – adolescent males. This is not to say that emphasis on women or the rest of the population is unimportant but that the development efforts too often ignore the needs of adolescent males.

Reared in a society that still embraces its warrior traditions, adolescent males find the ASG appealing for many valid reasons, when explained from within a Tausug frame. The tangled network of social relations that governs a Tausug's daily social interactions depends heavily on influence. To advance the interests of a Tausug's kinsmen, influence, whether political, monetary or military, is critical. While Jolo is an impoverished island, the inhabitants are still acutely aware of the development of the world around them. Since an adolescent male cannot improve his lot through legitimate means, he will seek his fame or fortune through organizations such as the ASG.

The adventurous nature of adolescent males is a given of human nature. Fortunately, the energy of these males is often channeled to productive efforts that provide males with a sense of accomplishment and maybe even status. To the Tausug male, status is necessary to influence social networks and advance his and his family's goals. Wealth is difficult to accumulate on Jolo, but achieving status through bravery is respected and maybe even of greater worth. An adolescent male may be able to acquire some wealth through participation in the ASG, but he will most certainly be able to impress his peers and superiors through acts of bravery in battle. The challenge, then, is how to provide adolescent males legitimate opportunities for gaining status and wealth that are more alluring than the risks associated with participating in the ASG.

Long-term projects focusing on increased education and improved healthcare will improve the future for all inhabitants of Jolo, but could lead to unintended consequences if these projects are not coupled with some amount of development, and development targeted specifically at adolescent males. If the status quo is maintained and security never established, then investment and development will not come to Jolo. The previously mentioned efforts will then result in a new generation of healthy, educated, and *disaffected* adolescent males. Until development comes to Jolo and new economic

opportunities are created, alternatives are necessary to channel the energy of adolescent males and deter their participation in illicit or insurgent activities.

The AFP is the ideal organization for leading this effort, in part because it is already in place. Already established as authority figures, soldiers can be role models to young men, particularly Tausug adolescents who cherish the warrior tradition. This may seem contradictory since the AFP is a symbol of the GRP, but the AFP has developed the strongest ties to the Tausug population, no doubt due to the corruption associated with the civilian government and police force. The AFP is also equipped with teams trained to conduct civil-military operations and many are staffed by Muslims to facilitate interactions with Tausug society. These teams could help create and manage public service organizations, social clubs, sports teams, etc. that emphasize some form of community service and provide a competitive outlet whereby males can achieve status legitimately.

The routine interaction of the AFP with these teams, clubs, and organizations should help overcome barriers and build trust in the AFP as the GRP's source of security for Jolo. These service and social organizations would emphasize pride in the Tausug identity and, over time, seek to improve the relationship between Tausugs and the government. If programs can be created that appeal to the adolescent male's need for adventure and status then the ASG's recruitment base will dwindle. With over 80% of the organization's strength comprised of males under the age of 25, the COIN strategy on Jolo must pay particular attention to the population that keeps the ASG active today.

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